
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 10 February 2020

by S A Schinaia MSc EngD FGS

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 18th March 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/K2610/W/19/3240764

Land to the South of Crown Bungalow and East of Rookery Nook, Drayton Lane, Horsford NR10 3AN

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal to grant outline planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Mr & Mrs Stallard against the decision of Broadland District Council.
 - The application Ref 20191056, dated 2 July 2019, was refused by notice dated 23 August 2019.
 - The development proposed is the erection of one detached dwelling and creation of one new access onto Drayton Lane.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matters

2. The application was made in outline with all matters reserved apart from access. I have had regard to the site location plan Dwg No. 1860-10a and proposed site plan Dwg No. 1860-11a, but only in respect of details relating to access. I have considered layout details shown on the submitted plans on a purely illustrative basis.

Main Issues

3. The main issues are (i) whether the site would be a suitable location for the proposed development having regard to the development strategy for the area and accessibility to services and facilities and (ii) the effect of the proposal upon the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

Development strategy

4. The appeal site is outside the defined settlement limits for Horsford and any other defined settlement boundary, therefore is considered to be an unsustainable location for any development. According to Policy GC2 of the Development Management Development Plan Document (2015) (DM DPD), development outside of settlement limits will be permitted where it accords with a specific allocation and/or policy of the development plan and does not result in any significant adverse impact. The appeal site is not allocated and there is no development plan policy which promotes development on it.

5. According to supporting text paragraph 2.13 of the DM DPD, the settlement hierarchy is in place to achieve growth targets in a sustainable way and focus residential development in settlements which are well-linked and well-related to existing development, services, facilities and employment opportunities.
6. The appeal site is on the south boundary of the urban settlement of Horsford. The site is close to bus stops with relatively frequent services to Norwich. Horsford has a number of facilities and services, including a foodstore, a pharmacy, a medical centre and a primary school. However, the peripheral location of the site compared to the rest of the village and the rural conditions around the site, with limited or absent paths and unlit roads, would unlikely encourage future residents to regularly walk or use bus services to access the services and facilities inside the village. Cycling may be possible in the summer months when the days are long, but I am not persuaded that this would be a regular mode of transport in the winter when it is dark and there is inclement weather.
7. For the above reasons, future residents would very likely be heavily reliant on unsustainable transport modes, such as private motor vehicles, to reach services and facilities inside the village and in larger settlements further afield for daily needs. I accept that future residents of the approved development scheme west of Holt Road to the north of the appeal site would be subject to accessibility conditions similar to that of the appeal site. However, unlike the appeal site, that site is closer to the services and facilities of the village and within the defined settlement boundaries of Horsford. Furthermore, I understand that the Council policy is to keep "the rural character and tranquillity" of Drayton Lane and, therefore, prevent any residential development that would harm the character and appearance of the area.
8. In reaching this view, I have taking into account paragraph 103 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2019) (the Framework) which indicates that opportunities to maximise sustainable transport solutions will vary between urban and rural areas. In this case, the development plan strategy is to direct new housing development to the defined settlements. I refer to housing land supply matters later on in the decision, but the evidence before me indicates that there is no pressing need to release the site for housing for supply reasons.
9. For the above reasons, I conclude that the appeal site does not represent a suitable location for housing, having regard to the development strategy for the area and accessibility to services and facilities. The proposal therefore would be contrary to Policy GC2 of the DM DPD and hence the sustainability requirements of Policy GC1 of the DM DPD. The development would be also contrary to Policy 1 of the Joint Core Strategy for Broadland, Norwich and South Norfolk (2014) (JCS) and section 9 of the Framework, which both promote sustainable transport.

Character and appearance

10. The application seeks outline planning permission for the sub-division of a residential plot and the erection of a detached dwelling. The site is a plot of land to the south of Crown Bungalow and currently is part of the residential garden for the host property, Rookery Nook. As the appeal site is not adjacent to Drayton Lane, a new vehicular access to the lane would be granted through

a corridor created between the properties of Rookery Nook and Crown Bungalow.

11. The host property is a single dwelling surrounded by a spacious and verdant plot. Drayton Lane is mostly characterised by sparse dwellings separated by large residential gardens. The presence of agricultural land to both south and west sides of the host property, together with the low density of the built environment in Drayton Lane, both provide a rural and spacious character to the surroundings.
12. The proposed development would be partially visible from Drayton Lane beyond the properties adjacent to the lane and partially screened by hedgerows from Holt Road. The access drive would not be detrimental to the character of Drayton Lane. However, as the proposed development would be built in a residential garden, it would detract from the green space surrounding the current buildings and increase the density of the built footprint in the area, affecting the pleasant spacious qualities of the area.
13. Paragraph 122 (d) of the Framework seeks to achieve appropriate densities, while making an efficient use of land and maintaining the prevailing character and setting of an area, including residential gardens. Furthermore, paragraph 70 of the Framework seeks to resist inappropriate development of residential gardens, where proposals would harm the local area.
14. For the reasons above, the appeal site would not be a suitable site owing to increased density and the development of a spacious residential garden. The proposal would therefore be detrimental to the spatial qualities and environmental setting of the area and consequently to the character and appearance of the locality. The proposed development would be therefore contrary to Policy 1 of the JCS, which seeks to achieve appropriate densities and the protection of environmental assets, and Policies GC4 and EN2 of the DM DPD, which aims to protect the character of the area. The proposal would also be contrary to paragraphs 122 and 70 of the Framework.

Other Considerations

15. The appellant has maintained that the Council cannot demonstrate a five year housing land supply for the Greater Norwich area. However, after the appeal application, in February 2020 the Greater Norwich authorities published the signed off Greater Norwich area Housing Land Supply Assessment 1st April 2019, as part of the Joint Core Strategy for Broadland, Norwich and South Norfolk: Annual Monitoring Report 2018-19 (January 2020). I have considered the assessment and the views expressed by the appellant and I am satisfied that the Greater Norwich authorities are able to demonstrate a deliverable five-year housing land supply of 5.89 years for the period 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2024, with the Broadland district demonstrating a supply of 8.50 years. Hence, paragraph 11(d) of the Framework is not engaged.
16. The appellant has further maintained that the new evidence in terms of housing land supply is a maximum figure and would be still subject to uncertainty over delivery, while the proposed development represents an efficient use of a sustainably located site and provides clear economic, social and environmental benefits. I acknowledge the benefits that would arise from the development but, owing to the amount of development proposed, the social and economic benefits of the proposal in terms of housing supply, building contracts and

support to the local community would be minimal. Furthermore, there would not be environmental benefits, but harm caused to the character and appearance of the area and from the likely use of unsustainable modes of transport.

17. In conclusion, and even if I had found that the local planning authority could not demonstrate a deliverable five year supply of housing sites, the identified adverse impacts of granting permission would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies of the Framework taken as a whole. Furthermore, I have found conflict with the development plan for the area.

Other Matters

18. I agree with the appellant that the proposal would not cause direct visual harm or adversely affect the setting of the heritage asset of The Lindens, a grade II listed building in Drayton Lane. This is because the proposal site is not adjacent to Drayton Lane and the proposed development would be mostly visually screened by the Crown Bungalow property. Therefore, the proposal would preserve the setting of the listed building. However, this is a matter of neutral consequence in decision making terms.

Conclusion

19. For the above reasons, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

S A Schinaia

INSPECTOR